

Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv Synagogue  
(now Pilgrim Baptist Church)  
3301 South Indiana Avenue  
Chicago  
Cook County  
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1054

HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
56-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
1730 North Lynn Street  
Arlington, Virginia

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ILL-1054

KEHILATH ANSHE MA'ARIV SYNAGOGUE  
(NOW PILGRIM BAPTIST CHURCH)HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
56-

Location: 3301 South Indiana Avenue; southeast corner of South Indiana Avenue and East 33rd Street, Chicago Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner and Use: Pilgrim Baptist Church.

Brief Statement of Significance: One of the few examples of ecclesiastical architecture to come from the office of Adler and Sullivan, this Chicago synagogue of 1890-91 was originally intended to be far more elegant and monumental. The exterior of the building is of heavy rusticated stone, while the interior displays a profusion of Sullivan ornament.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Lot 1 of Block 1 in Dyer & Davinson's Subdivision of the southeast one-quarter of the northwest one-quarter of Section 34-39-14. Recorded April 23, 1856.

The following is based on the chain of title contained in Book 532, pp. 1, 7-8, 57, in the Cook County Recorder's Office:

Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv purchased the land from Jerome Boecher and wife on December 3, 1889 (Document 1192735). The indication that a building would be placed on the land occurs in an agreement with Boecher, dated June 24, 1890 (Document 1292064). The congregation received clear ownership of the land and building from Frank E. Burley on May 9, 1898 (Document 2683476). On January 12, 1921, the property was sold to the Baptist executive Council of Chicago (Document 7037113), who in turn transferred it to the Pilgrim Baptist Church (Document 7037114). They are the present owners, as of the final entry in the record, dated November 7, 1963 (Document 18964967).

2. Date of Erection: 1890-91.
3. Architect: Adler and Sullivan.

4. Notes on original plans and construction:

- a. From the original building permit # 1402, recorded in Book F, October 1888-July 1891, p. 154, in the Department of Buildings, Chicago.

"April 26, 1890; Congregation Anshe Ma'ariv; 1-story synagogue; 71' front, 115' deep, 45' high; lot 1, Block 1, Dyer and Davinson in 34, Indiana Av., \$36.80 amt. for permit."

- b. From Industrial Chicago (1891), v. 1, p. 271:

"The Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv, or synagogue on Thirty-third street and Indiana Avenue was completed in June, 1891, at a cost of about \$110,000. The Romanesque arch marks the entrance and third story. In fact below the entablature the building is Romanesque, and presents some adherence to recognized form; but above, in the attic, a hip-roofed box, pierced by sets of simple windows, appear. This section partakes somewhat of the Venetian, and is supposed to supply the place of a dome. Never before was Venetian form so out of place."

- c. From Hugh, Morrison, Louis Sullivan (1935), pp. 124-125:

"At this time the firm was called on to do a synagogue for the Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv in Chicago. The building is of especial interest because of its close personal connection with Dankmar Adler. The Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv (Congregation of the Men of the West) was founded by Abraham Kohn, Adler's father-in-law, and his own father, Liebman Adler, became its first rabbi on his arrival in Chicago in 1861. Dankmar Adler was always a faithful member of the congregation, and on his death the funeral services were held in the synagogue. The building was begun in 1890 and dedicated on June 11, 1891. As originally contemplated, the structure was to be entirely of ashlar masonry, far more monumental in appearance than the executed design. One of the early renderings, made in water color by Paul Lantrup, may be seen in Pl. 34. With battered walls, extremely heavy window mullions and transoms, large arches, and a dense mass pruned of picturesque projections, it has a lithic solidity and force far surpassing that of the

finished building. Lack of funds prevented the execution of this impressive conception, and the reduction of cost through the use of cheaper Joliet stone and pressed sheet metal made the finished building a lamentable compromise. The south and east walls, since they faced inside the block, were made of brick, and the interior constructed as economically as possible of wood and terra cotta.

"The exterior of the present building (pl. 35) has a rusticated wall three stories high, capped by a slight cornice. The use of arches is reminiscent of Richardson, but the effect is hard and cold. This rectangular block is covered by a flat roof, out of which arises a clerestory with steep-pitched roof. The transition from the lower mass to the upper is abrupt, and the steep-pitched roof loses its proper effect through the omission of the lower pitched roof around the outside shown in the earlier design. The decorative treatment of the sheet metal walls of the clerestory, although by itself as beautiful as the pattern of an oriental rug, is hard to reconcile with the bolder texture of the wall below. The decorated cornice and parapet, made as cheaply as possible, are also poor substitutes for the masculine vigor and simplicity of these features in the early design. However, it must be recognized that in view of the limitations imposed on the architects they achieved a reasonable success.

"The interior of the synagogue (pl. 36) is considerably more effective. The ground floor is used for school and social rooms, and the large hall for the congregation rises from the second floor to a high vaulted roof in the clerestory. The pews on the floor are arranged in concentric segmental curves facing the pulpit, and there is a gallery curving around sides and back. Above the hall rises a species of tunnel vault, panelled in wood, with two large transverse ribs, toward which curved panels at the ends converge. The clerestory windows in groups of three arched lights penetrated the sides and back of this vault. At the east end is a semi-dome, and the curve of this is bordered by a broad and richly decorated arch above. The decorative designs in the bands of terra-cotta facing the gallery and at the base of the clerestory are among the richest examples of Sullivan's work. Although the structure of this auditorium is completely different from that of the theatres, the acoustic properties are outstanding -- another evidence of Adler's mastery of the science. Altogether the interior of it

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is admirably suited to its purpose, novel, and quite effective, although the gold of the decoration and the rich colors of the woods are necessary to a full realization of its beauty."

- d. From the "Chart Showing Costs of Building, 1879-1895," by Adler and Sullivan, an original manuscript in the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago:

1891, Anshe Ma'ariv Synagogue

Cubic Contents	903.400
2. Masonry	.0130
3. Carpentry	.0344
4. Struct. Iron	.0044
8. Terra Cotta	.0005
9. Cut Stone	.0125
11. Concrete or Asph.	.0011
13. Plastering	.0030
14. Orn. Plaster	.0015
15. Sheet Metal	.0060
17. Plg. Gas & Sewers	.0026
18. Boiler and tanks	
19. Heating Appar.	
20. Venting	.0046
30. Gas Fixtures	.0011
31. Painting	
32. Plain Glass	.0025
33. Stained Glass	.0042
49. Organ	.0075
50. Misc. Mach'y	.0018
Entire B'ldg.	.1007
Total Cost	\$91,005.85

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

The building is of interest primarily through its original association with Dankmar Adler's family.

C. Bibliography:

Bush-Brown, Albert, Louis Sullivan (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960), pp. 20, 21, 24, Photographs 33-35.

"Chart Showing Costs of Building, 1879-1895," by Adler and Sullivan. Manuscript in the Burnham Library of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Industrial Chicago (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891), v.1, p. 271.

Morrison, Hugh, Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1935), pp. 124-125, 301, Pls. 34-36.

"Synagogue, corner Indiana Ave. and Thirty-third Street, Adler and Sullivan, architects," Inland Architect 18(August, 1891): 2 pls. fol. p. 14. Engraving of interior, old view of exterior.

Prepared by Larry J. Homolka, Historian  
HABS Chicago project II, 1964  
J. William Rudd, Supervisory Architect  
September, 1964.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: Originally a synagogue, designed by Louis Sullivan with Dankmar Adler, it is presently used as a Baptist Church.
2. Condition of Fabric: Fair, although extensive build-up of coats of paint have diminished the subtle modeling of ornamental details.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: Three stories plus high clerestory.
2. Number of bays: Three bays (west front), four bays deep.
3. Overall dimensions: 91'-0" x 115'-4".
4. Layout-shape: Rectangular.
5. Foundations: Grey limestone.
6. Wall construction, finish and color: North and west walls are grey limestone. East and south walls are red face brick with limestone sills.
7. Structural system: Masonry bearing walls, with a vault suspended from trusses over main sanctuary.
8. Porches: A shallow porch exists on the west wall under a large limestone semi-circular arch. The level of the porch is raised five steps above the side walk.
9. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main doorway on west under stone arch. Secondary entrance on north with limestone surround. Two emergency exits on the east behind the chancel on the ground floor level.
  - b. Windows: Four window units both on north and south walls. The units are composed of three double-hung units (this triple unit is repeated at ground floor and first floor levels). A semi-circular fixed unit occurs at the

balcony level. Similar units on west wall. Rhythm is changed slightly on north and west walls for door openings. In the vault area, three groups of three windows each occur on north, south and west walls of the vault. These windows have an arched head, and have been painted over.

10. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Slightly sloping built-up roof over main block between parapet and vault. Hip roof over vault, has asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Wooden cornice at top of main masonry block. Metal gutter around vault at spring of hip.
- c. Dormers, cupolas and towers: A gable roof over rear projection extends east from vault and ends in a triangular pediment, flanked by two tall chimneys.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Located under south portion of church. Unfinished and used only for boiler room, storage and repair area.
- b. Ground Floor: Entrance foyer on west with stairs in northwest and southwest corners of building. Rest rooms under stairs. A caretaker's apartment is located in the southeast corner of the building, and the church offices are located along the north wall of the building to the east of the secondary north entrance. Remaining areas include an assembly hall and Sunday School rooms.
- c. Second Floor: A large narthex is located at the west end, and vestment and choir rooms are located at the east end. Remainder of the floor is sanctuary, with the pulpit at the east end.
- d. Balcony: A large balcony surrounds the main sanctuary space on three sides, and is reached by stairs, located in the four corners of the building. Robe storage, vestment areas and baptismal tank are located in the east end of this level.



2. Stairways: 4 stairways are located in each of the four corners of the building. Two wide main stairways are located at the west end, and two secondary stairways are located at the east end.
3. Flooring: Originally wooden flooring; many floors are now covered with asphalt tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster walls and ceiling with an oak wainscot on the ground floor level.
5. Doorways and doors: Original doors were oak paneled doors with a glass light in the upper portion of the door. Trim around doors matched doors. Many doors have been changed to fir flush-panel doors and have been stained dark.
6. Decorative detail and trim: Balcony front and frieze at base of vault have a repetitive Sullivan ornament detail. Highly detailed decoration also occurs at first floor column capitals in sanctuary, and in panels of decoration on east wall.
7. Lighting: Electrical. Originally a light bulb was located in the center of each unit of repetitive detail in the balcony frieze. Two large hanging light fixtures serviced by a winch above the vault have been replaced by other fixtures; however, chain and winch still exist.
8. Heating: Central.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: The church faces Indiana Avenue on the west, and 31st Street runs adjacent to the property on the north. The area is located very near a number of Urban Renewal projects. The general condition of the neighborhood is badly decayed.
2. Landscaping; walks and enclosures: A small strip of grass separates the sidewalk from the building on the west and on the north. There are a few bushes planted in this space, and a 3 foot high cyclone fence painted green encloses the grass area.

Prepared by J. William Rudd, Supervisory Arch.  
HABS Chicago Project, 1964

August, 1964.